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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/781,267	02/17/2004	E. Alan Lethers	2912.004	2038

26375 7590 08/25/2004

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EXAMINER

JOHNSON, BLAIR M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3634

DATE MAILED: 08/25/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/781,267

Applicant(s)

LEATHERS, E. ALAN

Examiner

Blair M. Johnson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: ____.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 13,14 and 17-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claims 13 and 14, there is no antecedent basis for "the rise". Also, the term "rise", which also appears in claim 19, is indefinite.

In claim 17, "according to the arrangement of step a" is not understood.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,2,4,5,7-10,12-15 and 17-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Davlantes '793.

See top cross piece 56, bottom piece 46, flap 38 and spacers 54 which nest in one another. Claims 13 and 14 are product by process claims. Regarding claim 13, since the "rise" is not understood, the bottom piece 46 is considered to be a spacer and it can removed. Also, a spacer 54 could be added below element 46, as required by claim 14. Claims 17 and 19 are addressed as best understood in light of the indefiniteness discussed above.

Claims 1,3-5,7-9,11,12,15 and 17-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Jansons et al.

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See top piece 14, bottom piece 20, flaps 4 which make up the portal, and spacers, either 15 alone or the panel which includes each segment 15. The limitation "protrusions for nesting" reads on the spacer panel being engaged by elements 23. Again, claims 17 and 19 are addressed as best understood.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davlantes '793 in view of Davlantes '331.

'331 discloses the well known structure of a flexible pet door flap. It would have been obvious to modify '793 whereby his flap is flexible so as render passage of the pet more comfortable.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

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Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-3,5 and 7 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-6 contain more structure which does not negate the structure which reads on the rejected claims

Claim 9 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1 and 2 contain more structure which does not negate the structure which reads on the rejected claims

Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-3 of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-3 contain more structure which does not negate the structure which reads on the rejected claims.

Claims 12-14 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-5 contain more structure which does not negate the structure which reads on the rejected claims.

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Claim 17 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claim 12 contains more structure which does not negate the structure which reads on the rejected claims.

Claims 6 and 16 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 and 1-5, respectively of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,483 in view of Davlantes '331. '331 is applied here as above.

Conclusion

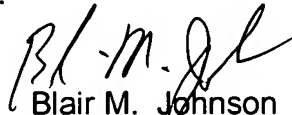
The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blair M. Johnson whose telephone number is (703) 308-0526. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri., 6:30-3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on (703) 308-2486. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Blair M. Johnson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3634

BMJ
8/20/04